



Offering Traditional Buddhist Teachings to Enrich Our Contemporary Lives

## Siddhartha School Project Fact Sheet

- The Siddhartha School was founded in 1995 by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Kachen Lobzang Tsetan, a Tibetan Buddhist monk and educator. The school is a nonprofit, private institution that is led by local people.
- The school is in Rinpoche's family village of Stok, Ladakh, India. Ladakh is a region in the northernmost Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, located between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Tibetan region of China.
- Jammu and Kashmir's 2011 literacy rate was about 69 percent, with almost 79 percent of males and 58 percent of females being literate. It is the only Indian state with a below-average literacy rate.
- The Siddhartha School began in a one-room shed and is now an exemplary private school with over 300 students in grades K–10.
- The school provides Ladakhi children with a high-quality, modern education. They learn four languages (English, Hindi, Tibetan, and Ladakhi), computer skills, science, math, creative arts, and social studies. Because it is an alternative to government schools, the Siddhartha School includes curricula about local culture and traditions.
- Unlike other schools in Ladakh, the Siddhartha School does not deny admission to children who lack funds for schooling.
- The school receives no public funds from the Indian government. Expenses are low, and the entire annual operating budget for 300 students is US\$55,000.
- In 2008 and 2009, 100 percent of the school's first two graduating classes passed the government exam that is required to move beyond 10th grade. A female student in each class set the highest exam records ever achieved in the Jammu and Kashmir region. (More than 70 percent of the students in Leh, Ladakh's commercial center, fail the government exam. Outside Leh, the failure rate is much higher.)
- The US-based Siddhartha School Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated solely to raising the funds necessary to keep the school operating. Funds go toward sponsoring students; creating a long-term operating fund for the school; and acquiring buildings, buses, and internet connectivity.

Source: Siddhartha School Project. <http://siddharthaschool.org/about/index.html>; Headcount 2011. (2011, April 11). *Kashmir Life*, Vol. 3, no. 5; Bradford, V. (2012). Newsletter: Ladakh, Siddhartha School, Tashi Lhunpo. *Resources*. BodhiMind Center. <http://bodhimindcenter.org/resources/>.